



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AH

28 May 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Urgent Diplomatic Issue - Albert Douglas, British national detained in Dubai

We are writing in respect of Albert Douglas, a British national who has been detained in Dubai since February 2021 over his son's company's bounced cheques, despite evidence proving his innocence. He begged authorities to run forensics on the cheque but only now, after his conviction, are they indicating this "may" be done.

Albert was detained for two months in Al Ain and has since been moved to Dubai. He has testified as to some grave human rights violations and torture committed against other inmates, and beatings against himself. He is 60 years old and was beaten for asking for his heart medication which he still does not have. He didn't ask again. He was forced to drink toilet water and has been repeatedly encouraged, under duress and threat, to falsely confess. His life has been threatened on numerous occasions.

Albert ran his own successful company in Dubai, but like many successful people, has become a target. There are now rumours that other cases have been opened against him and investigations are undergoing. This is to be expected. Cases that would usually be considered civil in the UK, are criminalised in Dubai. Therefore, if someone is imprisoned for one reason, it will usually cause them to default on personal and professional obligations and in turn, result in many more "criminal" complaints. Albert is also at great risk of extortive cases being opened against him, given that he is considered wealthy. When someone is jailed, the complainants will often rally up other people to open frivolous cases as a means to pressure and extort funds from the victim. This exact situation happened to Canadian André Gauthier who ended up with more than 70 cases against him. He was recently released and exonerated after the Canadian government's intervention.

For over a decade, the UAE has been highlighted for unfair trials, forced confessions, lengthy and unfair detentions, human rights violations, torture and even a death in custody. This is the reason that the United Kingdom refuses to extradite. This in itself, confirms the lack of due process in Dubai.

In numerous other cases over the past decade, the UAE has exonerated British citizens after being pressured by the government and by the media. Cases like Albert's highlight human rights violations, torture and just how risky it is for British nationals to invest in Dubai or to operate businesses. This is something that the FCO should warn British citizens about. If they are accused of a "crime", a conviction is almost automatic, evidence is rarely considered and most will be forced to confess. Once arrested, they are often subjected to human rights violations and yet this is not something the British government warns of.

This case of injustice is deeply concerning and the UK's response must be swift and strong. If the UK allows for these injustices to continue, more and more British nationals will be abused. At the other end of the spectrum, the UAE needs to work to rebuild their reputation in the business and tourism sectors after so many cases have been brought to public attention. Many political figures have been outspoken in respect of Princess Latifa, an Emirati citizen, and the same tenacity must be applied to our own citizens.

We urge you to assist the UAE and to pressure the UAE to understand that resolving this case and exonerating Albert, a 60 year old grandfather who should never have been arrested in the first place,

will go a long way to support the relationship between the countries, and to limit reputational damage.

The UAE's Foreign Minister worked with the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to exonerate and deport André Gauthier. A diplomatic resolution for Albert Douglas is clearly possible. In other cases, Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum, has personally intervened to order the release of British nationals.

We urge you to act swiftly for Albert Douglas and join other foreign governments who have advocated for their citizens in Dubai. That includes the United States who recently secured the release of Danielle Jeffries and Peter Clark. Malaysia's Foreign Minister personally travelled to Ras Al Khaimah, UAE to meet the ruler and secure the release of Richard Lau. Canada secured the release of André Gauthier and Australia helped Matt Joyce and Marcus Lee home. In other British matters, UK diplomatic intervention led to the release of Matthew Hedges, Asa Hutchinson, Conor Howard, Robert Urwin and more.

For the protection of British nationals abroad, we call on you to ensure the United Kingdom insist that Albert Douglas is deported home to the UK or that travel advisory warnings are revised and updated and that sanctions are discussed. Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt, MP suggested recently that sanctions were not off the table and we urge you to support a movement that will protect Albert and British nationals in the future.

We beg you to help this grandfather home. He is loved and respected in the community and should never have been subjected to such horrendous and egregious violations.

Yours sincerely,

Baroness Janet Whitaker, Co-Chair
Andy Slaughter MP, Vice Chair

On behalf of members and supporters of the APPG for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma

cc. Felicity Buchan MP